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**Subject:** Testimony re: DDS Budget-Feb 23, 2017  
**Date:** February 22, 2017 at 8:33 PM  
**To:** apptestimony@cga.ct.gov



Dannel P. Malloy  
Governor

State of Connecticut  
Department of Developmental Services

**DDS**

Council on Developmental Services

Jordan A. Scheff  
Acting Commissioner

**Testimony for Appropriations Committee Public Hearing  
on the Governor's Proposed Budget  
February 23, 2017**

I am very grateful to Senator Osten, Senator Formica, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee for the opportunity to speak about the proposed FY 2018-2019 budget for the Department of Developmental Services.

My name is Adrienne Benjamin, and I serve as the Chair of the Governor's Council on Developmental Services. Our Council is currently composed of 12 members, one of whom is a self advocate and 9 who have family members living with a wide range of intellectual disabilities. Some of our family members are supported by private providers, others by state providers, while others live at home with the occasional support of respite services and others have no supports.

After so many years of cuts to DDS, we were thrilled to see that in this budget, Governor Malloy proposed additional funding to begin to address the serious unmet needs of those waiting for residential services. As well as additional funding for private providers and a modest expansion of respite services. We understand that these allocations won't meet the needs of all our families, but it is a very positive step that will assist many.

However, the Governor's Council feels there is a significant problem in the budget that must be addressed. There is no funding for any new graduates for the next 2 years. Over 600 young adults with intellectual disabilities will be leaving their school programs. Without funding for these 21 year olds they will have no place to go, nothing to do, nor any staff to assist them.

This means they will have no day structure, no stimulation, and no goals to work toward. Our families can tell you of the rapid regression that occurs in these young adults. We experience this during summer break, even during the two weeks off between Christmas and New Years. This regression will lead to a loss of skills acquired in school. There will be significant boredom, agitation, and acting out. There will be more doctor's appointments, more medication, and some will land in the emergency room, requiring even more costly emergency placements.

These young adults cannot be left alone. Therefore, in a two parent family, one parent will have to quit their job, leading to a financial crisis. Even more devastating, in a single parent home, that parent would need to leave their job, stay home and likely become dependent on state aide.

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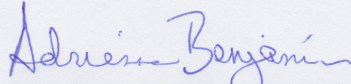


We know that the budgetary constraints facing the state aren't your fault. Nor the Governor's. Nor our DDS families. We understand there are many very important needs facing many families, and that you have a very difficult job.

It is no exaggeration to say that these families are in desperate need for these day services. They have no where else to turn. They are counting on you. On behalf of the Council we ask you to restore the funding for the day programs for our graduates.

On behalf of the Governors Council on Developmental Services, I thank you.

Respectfully,



Adrienne Benjamin, Chair, Council on Developmental Services, New Britain  
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Jaime Lazaroff, Secretary, Hampton  
Jennifer Carroll, Glastonbury  
Karen Hlavac, Wallingford  
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